Roads in Rajasthan

549. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Government of Rajasthan had proposed for 18 State roads as new National Highways;

(b) if so, whether Government have approved the said proposals;

(c) if so, by when the said roads would be officially declared as National Highways; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. The State Government of Rajasthan had proposed conversion of 25 State roads into National Highways.

(b) to (d) All the proposals received from the State Government of Rajasthan for declaration of State roads as new National Highways have been returned to State Government. There is a ban on declaration of new National Highways due to fund constraints.

Collection of toll tax

550. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that travellers are being burdened with development as well as maintenance of roads as they have to pay exorbitant toll tax on various Highways and Express ways;

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to device a method to collect reasonable toll tax on various Highways;

(c) whether Government have received number of proposals from various organisations urging to minimise the collection of toll tax; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) User fee is being levied under the provisions of National Highway Act, 1956 as amended by Parliament. Government has approved the ceiling rates for various categories of vehicles in July, 1997. These rates have been fixed after giving due consideration to the savings accrued to users on vehicle operating cost, damage caused to the road and willingness to pay. On the improved facilities, user fee charged is much less than the savings accruing to the user.

(b) to (d) Representations have been received from individuals/ organisations for reducing toll fee, giving rebate/concession or for replacement of levy of fee by additional cess on petrol and diesel. A committee has been constituted by the Government to examine the methodology of working out quantum of toll charges.

National Highways in Himachal Pradesh

551. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sanctioned any amount for construction and widening of various National Highways in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of funds likely to be released for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In the last year and current year, 29 works amounting to Rs. 67.12 crores have been sanctioned for construction and widening of National Highways in Himachal Pradesh. The allocation for National Highway works in Himachal Pradesh in the year 2003-04 is Rs. 47.00 crores.